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SOURCES & STREAMS – MARIST SYMPOSIUM

The first Marist Symposium was held at the General House from December 4 to 8, 2023. It was an academic congress on different themes of Marist spiritual and historical heritage: spirituality, education, formation, leadership and, in general, on Marist mission and life.

It was organized by the Institute's International Commission for Marist Spiritual Patrimony and supported by the Brother Superior General and his Council to promote Marist historical, spiritual and charismatic richness. It was attended by around 100 people, laypeople and brothers of the Institute and members of the other branches of the Marist family. The second edition of this initiative is scheduled for 2025 in Notre-Dame de

l'Hermitage, France.

Representing the General Government of the Institute were the Superior General, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, the Vicar General, Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, and Br. João Carlos do Prado, General Councilor. The Superior General of the Marist Priests, Fr. John Larson, was also present at some of the sessions. The Marist Spiritual Patrimony Commission, coordinated by Br. Antonio Ramalho, participated actively in the organization and development of the event, together with Br. Ángel Medina, director of the Secretariat of Brothers Today, other brothers, and General Administration laypeople.

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Symposium Objectives

The Symposium Committee, made up of Brothers Michael Green (Star of the Sea), Vincent de Paul Kouassi N'Guessan (West Africa) and Omar Peña (Central America) identified the following objectives for the event:

- To bring together Marist scholars, researchers, writers, formators, animators, and directors of Marist mission and life so that they can get to know one another, and work together to in the care, preservation, and enhancement of Marist spiritual patrimony
- To foster new scholarship and writing on Marist themes, and provide a forum for this to be disseminated and discussed among Marists from a range of backgrounds and expertise
- To nurture new and potential Marist researchers and writers, and to build inter-generational links
- To connect with the different branches of the Society of Mary to enrich Marist spiritual and missionary patrimony
- To build links and networks at an "inter" level (International, intercultural, intergenerational and intercongregational).



DAY ONE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4

The first day of the meeting began with the inaugural session, led by Brother Omar Peña from the Province of Central America. The Superior General then welcomed the participants. During his remarks, Brother Ernesto hoped that “the deepening of the Marist charism in these days will touch our hearts, allowing us to better embrace evangelical values.” And he recalled that “it is important to share it with current and future generations, using a language that helps them to connect better with Marist values in order to take them on board in their own lives.” Then Brother Antonio Ramalho, Superior of the Community of Notre Dame de l’Hermitage, and coordinator of the International Patrimony Commission, presented the Symposium project defined by the commission and approved by the General Council, “with the aim of deepening and broadening knowledge of historical and charismatic sources, in order to feed the springs that inspire and give life to Marist formation and mission today and in the future”.

The **first** in-depth talk was given by Br. Michael Green, from the Star of the Sea Province, who in the last twenty-five years, has been increasingly involved in writing and animation on topics of Marist history, education and spirituality. In his speech, Br. Michael heightened that the spirituality bequeathed us by St Marcellin and the early Brothers was one that was unequivocally centred on a loving and intimate relationship with Jesus, which was the wellspring of all their religious and apostolic practice. At the same time, he called the attention of the participant to some exaggerated focus on the person of Marcellin Champagnat and the cultural stylism of the Marist way, which at its extreme risked a kind of cultism. Both trends, he said, continue to pose risks for the integrity of Marist spirituality.

The **second** talk, in the afternoon, was given by Br. André Lanfrey, a Marist Brother of the Province of L’Hermitage,



teacher of French and History-Geography in secondary and higher education in France from 1862 to 2010. His talk had as its theme “The origin of the Marist Brothers within the Society of Mary”. With his words, he tried to reinterpret the origin of the Marist Brothers within the Society of Mary, underlining three moments: at the time of Father Champagnat (1814-1840); under the tutelage of Father Colin (1840-1852); affirmation of their own identity in the face of papal authority and the Marist Fathers (1852-1863).

The **last** conference of the day was given by Danilo Luis Farneda Calgaro, Coordinator of the Spiritual and Religious Care Service (Psychiatric Hospital – Sisters Hospitaliers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Malaga, Spain) and member of the fraternity “Virgen de la Victoria” (CMMF) and lay person linked to the Marist Province of Mediterránea. His intervention was an approach to the socio-economic, pedagogical and ecclesial coordinates in which the educational model of the Little Brothers of Mary was born. For Danilo, this “will allow us to have an adequate horizon to deepen our understanding of the motivations, objectives, ways of understanding and living education on the part of our Founder and the first Brothers”. The day ended with the Eucharistic celebration.



SUPERIOR GENERAL'S WELCOME ADDRESS

I thank you for being present at this Marist Symposium which is a significant event for the Institute. A meeting like this strengthens our “journey as a global Marist Family”, a call we received from the XXII General Chapter which leads us to listen, dialogue, share and create networks of support. Besides your presence here, I am grateful for what you are doing in the Institute in relation to our Marist charismatic patrimony. Many of you work in centres and programs that study this field and make it more widely available.

Thanks to the Commission of Marist Spiritual Patrimony for organizing this event. To Br. Antonio Ramalho, the coordinator of the Commission and a member of the Symposium Planning Committee, along with Br. Michael Green, coordinator of the Committee, with Brs. Omar Peña and Vincent de Paul Kouassi. And to the Secretariat of Brothers Today for your support of the Commission through Angel Medina being a member. Thanks to the General House and the Hotel for your hospitality. Thanks to all those who will make presentations, for sharing your reflections and your experience.

Thanks also to those who have come from the other Marist branches.

We know that our charism is a gift of the Spirit which we have received through St. Marcellin Champagnat, the first Brothers and over the course of 206 years, through so many Brothers, lay men and women.

In the coming days we will have the chance to listen to presentations from people who have studied at depth various topics related to our Marist charism; the chance to listen and discuss. I invite you to listen, especially, to the voice of the Spirit, calling on each of us personally and as an Institute to live Marist life and mission with greater passion, and to keep on caring for Marist life, generating new life.

May getting in touch with the Marist charism more deeply over these days move our hearts to be more open to the values of the Gospel. Champagnat invited us to follow Jesus like Mary. She is our inspiration and walks alongside us on this journey. If the themes we study touch our hearts, it will be easier for us to share and disseminate the Marist charismatic patrimony. It is crucial to share this heritage with current and future generations, using a language that helps us to connect better with Marist values and to embrace them in our own lives.

In a few months' time, in May 2024, we will celebrate the bicentenary of the beginnings of the house of N.D. de l'Hermitage. Marcellin had a great capacity to “look beyond” in those early days of the Institute, thanks to his attentive ears and his audacious heart. I invite you to do the same during these days, so that the reflections we hear and the dialogues we engage in will help us to “look beyond”, and to seek the best



ways to live, share and spread Marist values wherever we are in the world.

In the month of October I had the privilege of participating in the Synodal Assembly, a gathering in which we sought to carry out a dialogue in the Spirit, trying to connect Gospel values with our present-day context. I was happy to meet a good number of Cardinals and Bishops who know of us, some of whom even shared with me that they had been Marist students. When we went to the Eucharist in St. Peter's Basilica, we would pass in front of the statue of St. Marcellin Champagnat. I would tell them that the child on his shoulders could symbolize Marcellin Champagnat who, besides “looking beyond” himself, taught his students to “look beyond”, a phrase that the Holy Father used in his address to us in the Audience that we Provincials and District Superiors had during the General Conference of 2021. When I greeted Pope Francis, I told him that, when he leaves his house in Santa Martha, the first statue he sees in front of him is that of St. Marcellin, our Founder, and he said to me, “Of course I know him”. I think that seeing the statue inspired him to use that phrase in speaking to us.

Next year we will also be celebrating the 25th anniversary of Champagnat's canonisation, a gift for our Institute, for the Church and for the world.

Thank you for your attention. Let us entrust this meeting into the hands of Mary, our Good Mother, remembering that this is her work.

Br. Ernesto Sánchez - December 4, 2023

DAY TWO

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

On that day, 3 lectures were proposed and, in the last session, participants were able to choose one of the three proposed seminar.

The first talk was a continuation of the topic treated the day before by Brother André Lanfrey, “The Origin of the Marist Brothers in the Society of Mary”. The day’s reflection covered the period after the death of St. Marcellin Champagnat, the periods under the tutelage of Father Colin (1840-1852) and the affirmation of their own identity in the face of papal authority and the Marist Fathers (1852-1863).

In the second part of the morning, Angelo Ricordi, from the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul, spoke on the Spirituality of the Heart. He works as a researcher at the Marist Memorial of Curitiba and at the Ir. François Rivat Chair of the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná. His thesis “A certeanian reading of the origins of Marist Spirituality” deals with the importance of the manuscripts of the Founder and of the first Marist Brothers in the construction of the spirituality of the Institute. With this conference, Angelo wanted to underline the importance of “going back to the sources” and their hermeneutics for the relevance of what we understand by Marist spirituality in our time. To this end, he showed that all the expressions used throughout the history of the Institute to understand its spirituality, such as “the spirit of the Institute”, “Marist apostolic spirituality”, “the spirituality of Father Champagnat” and, more recently, “the spirituality of the heart”, are historical and contextualized re-readings that can be included in what we call Marist spirituality.



In the afternoon, the participants attended the conference of Brother Manuel Mesonero Sánchez, who is a professor at Villalba College (Madrid) and delegate of MarCha Groups of the College. Brother Manuel has published 8 books on Marcellin. His talk was entitled “From darkness to light. The passage from Asceticism to Mysticism in Marcellin Champagnat”, presenting the figure of Marcellin in the transition from Asceticism to Mysticism. He placed Marcellin at La Valla and the Hermitage, showing the characteristics of his ascetical life, and then narrated the events that gave rise to the “Dark Night”. He ended by pointing out the impact that these events had on him, and the meaning he gave to this period when he came out of it. The end of the afternoon of the second day of the symposium was marked by three proposals that took place simultaneously.

Each participant chose to speak on one of them:

Personal Letters of Brother François – Br. Antonio Martínez Estaún (Province of l’Hermitage).

Marist spiritual patrimony and institutional identity: visual and digital narratives and multisensory experiences – Dyogenes Philippsen Araujo (Province of Brasil Centro-Sul).

Exhibition and explanation of material from the General Archives: Dorotea Cinanni (Director of the General House Archives) and Br. Colin Chalmers (District of West Central Europe).

The Eucharistic celebration concluded the last day of the Symposium.



DAY THREE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

The third day of the Marist Symposium, December 6, included presentations by Father Alois Greiler, Br. Antonio Martínez Estaún, Br. John Klein, Fabiano Incerti, Michael Connolly and Father Milikiade Rayalu. On this day, the Symposium was enriched by the participation of members of the other branches of the Marist family, who joined the participants, among whom the Superior General of the Marist Fathers, Father John Larsen, stood out.

The first lecture was entitled “Why Beatify Jean-Claude Colin? A Marist Vision of the Church”, presented by Fr. Alois Greiler, SM. He has a doctorate in church history (Louvain, Belgium) and worked in the field of Marist history and spirituality, resulting in various publications, retreats, and conferences. In his presentation, Fr. Alois show how the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) made a restart to promote the cause of their founder, Jean-Claude Colin, in 2009. The members of the congregation are undecided with various arguments in favour or against. Fr. Alois presented the situation of the cause and arguments in favour: Colin as inspiration for a ‘school of saints’, as inspiration for the great work of the Marist pioneers in the Pacific and the other Marist ministries, as inspiration for a Marist church.

The second talk of the day was given by Brother Antonio Martínez Estaún, from the Hermitage Province, currently living in the community of Xaudaró (Madrid). Br. Antonio holds a Master's degree in Education from Universidad Marista (Mexico). He provided various services to the Institute in General Administration: Director of Communications of the Institute (2005-2011), Member of the International Commission of Marist Patrimony (2011- 2017), Coordinator of the Course Charism and Marist Educational Principles (2012), coordinator of the edition of the History of the Institute (2015) and Postulator General (2016).



His lecture had as title “Sources inspiring the Thought of Brother Basilio Rueda”. Br. Estaún indicated that the formation of Brother Basilio Rueda drew from important sources that helped him to form his personality: Marist formation, university formation, where his doctoral thesis “Being and Value” stands out. The afternoon opened with a talk by Brother John Klein, from the United States Province. He is Province’s Historian, Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving in the U.S. Province Development Office. Academically, Br. John received his Master’s and Doctoral Degrees in United States History from Fordham University. He served as a teacher and school administrator in several Marist schools and later was Provincial of the former Province of Esopus and in 2003, was named the first Provincial of the new Province of the United States. During the 2009 Marist General Chapter he was elected as a General Councillor. His conference title was “The Americanization of Marcellin’s Marist Project”. Br. John presented the reality of Marist life in the United States from its formation as a separate Province (March 11, 1911) until the involvement of the United States in the Second World War (December 7, 1941).

The last section offered Concurrent sessions as indicated here:

Br. Francisco Riva e a paixão pela escrita – Dr Fabiano Incerti (Province of Brasil Centro-Sul)

Walfrid: a life of faith, community and football. (Brother Walfrid, Founder of Celtic Football Club) – Dr Michael Connolly (District of West Central Europe)

Challenges and learnings with religious formation in the Pacific (Fr Milikiade Rayalu, SM).

To conclude the day, the participants were invited to join the community of the General Administration in the daily mass.



FOURTH DAY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

December 7, the penultimate day of the Marist Symposium, was marked by the presentation of topics related to Marist leadership, Safeguarding and the mixed Marist community. At the end of the afternoon, participants had a choice of three seminars related to the General Administration archives, the Marist Memorial of Curitiba and the Founder of Celtic Football Club.

The first talk was given by Br. João Carlos do Prado, General Councilor. Coming from the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul, Br. João defended his doctorate in Education at St Mary's University, Twickenham, London, last year. His presentation dealt with the reflections and results of the study on the essential elements for the formation of prophetic and collaborative global leaders committed to the future of the Marist charism. It was an occasion to present a portrait of the current strengths, challenges and opportunities in Marist leadership formation processes.

There was also time to highlight the main elements that influenced the leadership and charism of Marcellin Champagnat and the foundation of the Marist Institute; the Marist charism in today's context; the main concepts of global prophetic and collaborative leadership and the key elements to consider in their formation.

The morning's work was completed with a presentation by Br. Brendan Geary of the District of West Central Europe, entitled "I don't like teachers who are executioners' – Safeguarding in Marist origins and recent developments. He is a psychotherapist, and clinical and counselling psychologist. Br. Brendan studied for a Doctorate in Pastoral Counselling at Loyola College in Maryland (1997 – 2003) where he worked with a range of groups. He specialised in work with sex offenders and victims of sexual abuse. He is a member of the Care and Protection Commission of the International Union of Superiors General. He is also involved in leading workshops and training

programmes and is currently involved in research on Australian Marist Brothers who abused children.

In his presentation, Br. Brendan looked at the safeguarding of children as reported in the life of St. Marcellin. He then looked at ways that the Marist Institute and some individual Brothers have not always been faithful to the tradition we inherited from the Founder. He highlighted also the ways that the leaders of the Institute have responded to the abuse crisis in recent years, and the way that safeguarding is now dealt with in the Marist Constitutions and safeguarding policies.

The afternoon began with a talk on the essence of the mixed community of Brothers and Lay Marists.

Brother Vincent de Paul Kouassi N'Guessan was the speaker. He defended the need to create this type of community not because there is a lack of brothers, a widespread opinion in Africa, but because of the necessity of the Marist mission. These communities should have the following characteristics: Christocentric, oriented to the Marist mission, with a program of joint formation and accompaniment.

Brother Vincent is a native of Ivory Coast and is currently the Director of Marist International University College (MIUC) in Nairobi, Kenya. He holds a doctorate in Philosophy (Ivory Coast) and in Higher Education (Walden University).

The last working session proposed three talks at the same time, from which each participant could choose one:

Marist spiritual heritage and institutional identity: visual and digital narratives and multisensory experiences (Dyogenes Philippsen Araujo).

Opening the treasures of the Marist Archives (Dorotea Cinanni & Br. Colin Chalmers)

Walfrid: a life of faith, community, and football – Brother Walfrid, Founder of Celtic Football Club (Michael Connolly).

The Eucharistic celebration closed the penultimate day of the Symposium.



MARIST SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDES DECEMBER 8TH

On Friday, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Marist Symposium “Sources and Streams”, promoted by the Marist Institute and organized by the International Commission for Marist Spiritual Patrimony, came to an end. Brothers Michael Green, Omar Peña and Vincent de Paul, together with the directors of the Brothers Today Secretariat, Ángel Medina and Lindley Sionosa, formed the organizing committee. All the members of the Patrimony Commission actively participated in the realization of the Symposium, which brought together around 100 people, lay and consecrated members of the Marist family.

The last conference of the meeting was given by Brother Juan Jesus Moral Barrio, from the Province of the Hermitage. His reflection was entitled “Educating from the paradigm of interiority”. After reflecting on what is meant by interiority, Brother Juan Moral proposed a change of strategy in pedagogy: instead of expecting and pretending that models, ways and means come from the outside, favoring that they come from within. This proposal is based on the realization that we can’t start from the outside, whose control is out of our reach; we need to bring out the best in ourselves, looking for the meaning of God. Brother Juan Moral has a doctorate in philosophy and educational sciences and was also archivist at the General House. He lives in Barcelona, where he is a professor at the Higher Institute of Religious Sciences. At the same time, he collaborates with the Marist Memorial in Curitiba.

Brother Michael Green gave the concluding speech in which he summarized the journey that had taken place and indicated the next steps. He began by emphasizing the success of the

meeting, thanks to “what” and “who”: what was felt, presented, the ideas, the research; and also thanks to “who” participated, the time spent together, getting to know each other. He then recalled the aims of the symposium and how they had been achieved: to bring together Marist researchers, formators, animators...; to encourage new research and promote literary works on Marist themes; to promote new and potential Marist researchers and writers, creating a link between the generations. He also announced the intention of the Patrimony Commission to hold the second symposium in 2025 at Notre-Dame de l’Hermitage. For this event, he stressed that the new generation that is researching the Marist charism must emerge. He also wanted women to be heard, since the majority of people involved in the Marist mission are women. He also asked what new research needs to be done at the Marist level and invited all the participants to leave their evaluations and suggestions for the continuation of the process experienced at this symposium. Finally, Brother Michael, on behalf of the Patrimony Commission, thanked the many people who had collaborated in making the event a success.

The symposium ended with the festive Mass of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, celebrated by the Superior General of the Marist Fathers, Father John Larsen. During the celebration, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, received the temporary profession of Brother Nathan da Costa Cardoso dos Santos, from the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul, a participant in the Symposium, who renewed his vows as a Marist Brother. Then everyone was invited to a festive lunch.



BR. MICHAEL GREEN – SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT MARIST SYMPOSIUM



In anticipation of the upcoming Symposium in 2025 at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, France, we are setting the stage for an exciting exploration of ideas and insights. As we look forward to this gathering, there are key considerations that demand our attention and deliberate efforts.

First, it's been important to observe the collaboration of seasoned scholars and researchers alongside the presence of younger individuals who represent the future generation of writers, animators, researchers, and leaders. This inclusivity is pivotal, underscoring the significance of nurturing potential within our community. Looking ahead to the next Symposium, let's actively seek and engage with this diverse array of voices, ensuring a well-rounded representation of both seasoned and emerging contributors.

Secondly, a crucial aspect is the selection of presenters. The question arises: who should we invite to share their insights? The consensus is clear—let's open the floor to a diverse range of voices. The call is extended not only to established

researchers and writers but also to those engaged in postgraduate studies. The experiences of individuals involved in Marist leadership, administration, and spiritual direction are equally vital. The call to hear from women is particularly emphasized, recognizing the indispensable role they play in shaping Marist life and mission. Let us hear from women... – a strong plea underlining the essential need for the presence and voices of women in our discussions. Considering that, in many regions, women form the majority of those actively participating. And third, what studies or writings should be undertaken? While possibilities for future research and writing have been discussed, the challenge is to actively contemplate how we can foster and encourage new research. This involves not only identifying potential areas for exploration but also considering how to sponsor and support these endeavors. The aim is to perpetuate the evolution of our narrative, ensuring it remains dynamic and reflective of our community's growth and aspirations.

It becomes evident that our commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and the encouragement of innovative thinking will be pivotal in shaping the future of Marist discourse. By actively seeking diverse voices and supporting new avenues of research and writing, we not only honor the richness of our community but also lay the foundation for a narrative that truly encapsulates the multifaceted essence of Marist life and mission.



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